UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.9 (A)
5 December 2000

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH/FRENCH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Fourth session
Bonn, 11-22 December 2000
Item 7 (j) of the provisional agenda[1]

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

(j) CONSIDERATION OF A DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE COMMITMENTS TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OBLIGATIONS OF THE CONVENTION

Addendum

Note by the Executive Secretary

By its decision 8/COP.3, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to take appropriate action for the formulation of a draft declaration on the commitments to enhance implementation of the obligations of the Convention.

By the same decision all Parties, relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations were invited to submit their written proposals and/or suggestions for the text of the declaration.

As requested, a compilation and a synthesis of proposals and/or suggestions received are attached to this note. The draft declaration is contained in ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.9 (B) for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

[1] ICCD/COP(4)/1.

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I. BACKGROUND

1. By decision 8/COP.3, the Conference of the Parties stressed the necessity to formulate, for consideration and adoption at its fourth session in the year 2000, a declaration on the commitments under the Convention to enhance implementation of the obligations of the Convention.

2. Paragraph 2 of the same decision stressed also that the declaration should cover an agreed period and be focused on a limited number of specific thematic and sectoral areas to be determined and consistent with action programmes under the Convention.

3. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of the same decision of the Conference of the Parties seven (7) written proposals for the text of a declaration were transmitted to the secretariat.

4. A compilation of the written contributions from country Parties, regional groups and non-governmental organizations is contained in the annex to this document for consideration by the Conference of the Parties.

II. SYNTHESIS OF PROPOSALS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

A. Purpose

5. The purposes of a declaration on the commitments under the Convention to enhance implementation of the obligations of the Convention are as follows:

(a) To reaffirm the resolve of the international community to actively continue supporting the effective implementation of the Convention;

(b) To recognize the particular need for supporting the implementation of the Convention in developing country Parties;

(c) To adopt strategic measures which derive from the information contained in the reports on the status of implementation of the Convention submitted by affected country Parties;

(d) To stimulate the effort of the international community to guarantee a full and efficient implementation of the Convention through a better coordination of action at all levels;

(e) To present a perspective for further development of the UNCCD activities and constitute an indispensable working tool for policy makers and all relevant actors that are involved in the implementation of the Convention.

B. Character of the declaration

6. The document should: (a) warrant the elaboration of a non-legally binding declaration as opposed to a regular decision of the Parties; (b) make its political nature very clear; and (c) seek high visibility so as to act as a crystalizer and catalyzer for action.

C. Objectives

7. Through the declaration, Parties should:

(a) Develop a genuine partnership through appropriate action that includes, *inter alia*, substantial financial resources, new and additional funding, access to appropriate technology and methods to improve productivity, and prevent and control desertification;

(b) Stimulate efforts to promote eradication of poverty in affected developing country Parties;

(c) Seek ways to further enhance the implementation of the Convention through the integration of National Action Programmes (NAPs)into national sustainable development strategies.

D. Time-frame

8. The declaration should cover a period of ten years from 2001 to 2010:

(a) A realistic time-frame would include five years benchmark assessments.

E. Specific thematic and sectoral areas

9. Special efforts should focus on the following:

(a) Promoting the integrated management of water resources;

(b) Promoting new and renewable energy sources;

(c) Promoting sustainable methodology for soil management;

(d) Developing and promoting sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems;

(e) Launching reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensifying the management of existing forest resources in the affected countries.

F. Concrete measures and means

10. In reiterating the key role of national, subregional and regional action programmes and the importance of the full and effective participation of all parties in the process of their formulation and implementation, the Parties should like to consider for adoption proactive measures dedicated to enhancing the implementation of the Convention.

11. Innovative financial measures may include:

(a) Establishing and facilitating access to special micro-credit programmes;

(b) Promoting private sector investments in activities related to CCD;

(c) Developing monetary, fiscal and debt-management policies;

(d) Mainstreaming the CCD in development cooperation programmes.

(e) Relieving the debts of the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), especially the least developed countries (LDCs) affected by desertification;

(f) Mobilizing substantial financial resources through innovative ways which include direct commercial financing mechanisms; direct concessionary financing mechanisms such as National Desertification Funds (NDFs); debt for nature swaps; small and medium-sized credit lines; and small targeted grants;

(g) Promoting market development mechanisms in particular clean development mechanism (CDM); water resources use charges;

(h) Promoting structural mechanisms, such as fiscal instruments, environment performance bonds;

(i) Engaging oil companies, particularly those operating in affected developing countries to give as grant, every year of the decade, one day sale of their production;

(j) Promoting the organization of a world-wide lottery on the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification;

(k) Inviting Parties to the Convention and other interested actors to provide a special financial contribution the first year of the decade for the implementation of projects and activities identified in the framework of the declaration;

(l) Promoting the interest of affected LDCs with the world trade organization, enhancing the market access of their exports and the benefits from further world trade liberalization;

(m) Promoting the application of traditional knowledge to combat desertification;

(n) Promoting environmental education and the development of policies to eradicate illiteracy in arid and semi-arid areas;

(o) Promoting capacity-building, especially for community based organizations;

(p) Establishing and/or strengthening early warning systems.

G. Monitoring and follow-up

12. An overall assessment of desertification (OAD) would be undertaken so as to provide a clear picture of the global desertification status.

13. The declaration should include firm governmental commitments to satisfy quantifiable and verifiable objectives within an agreed period.

Annex

COMPILATION OF PROPOSALS AND/OR SUGGESTIONS

I. NIGERIA ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA

INTRODUCTION

1. The adoption of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (UNCCD) was seen as one of the concrete results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992. Since the entry into force, of the Convention on 26th December 1996, and its ratification by more than 160 countries, affected developing country Parties, particularly those in Africa, and also in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, have amply demonstrated that the progress of implementation so far requires a more focused approach, in particular the participatory approach.

2. In this context, the success of the Convention will be measured, step by step, by the level of commitment of the Parties, notably by developed country Parties, and by the seriousness with which those commitments can be met, to ensure its effective and full implementation. In accordance with decision 8 of COP 3, fulfilling commitments under the Convention aims to ensure that resources made available are used with greater efficiency and equity in order to achieve sustainable development in affected areas and, consequently, to eradicate the worst manifestations of poverty.

3. Therefore, a new and more effective approach is needed at all levels to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the Convention with a view to developing a genuine partnership, through appropriate action that includes, *inter alia*, substantial financial resources, new and additional funding and access to technology, without which it will be difficult for affected developing countries to fruitfully combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought for the benefit of present and future generations.

PERIOD THE DECLARATION SHOULD COVER

4. The declaration should cover a period of ten (10) years from 2001 to 2010. In other words, the first decade of the twenty-first century.

IDENTIFICATION OF CRITICAL ELEMENTS NECESSARY TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

5. The identification of critical elements necessary to enhance the implementation of the Convention is linked to the general and specific obligations under the Convention. The general obligations are in the provisions of articles 4, 7 and 8, the specific provisions of article 5 for affected countries and in article 6 for developed country Parties. But, other provisions of the Convention are related to general or specific obligations for all Parties or some of them.

6. In this context, the critical elements necessary to enhance the implementation of the Convention are:

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[2] Reproduced in the original languages in which they were received, without formal editing by the UNCCD secretariat.

(i) mobilization and channelling of sustainable financial resources, including new and additional funding as well as mobilization of funding from the private sector and other non-governmental sources, and other forms of support to assist affected developing countries;

(ii) Promotion of environmentally sound, economically viable and socially acceptable transfer of technology relevant to combating Desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought;

(iii) Definition/determination of specific thematic areas and priority activities or actions showing more linkage between poverty eradication and combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought;

(iv) Conclusion of partnership arrangements or agreements.

DETERMINATION OF SPECIFIC THEMATIC AND SECTORAL AREAS

7. The determination of a limited number of specific thematic and sectoral areas consistent with action programmes under the Convention aims at focusing human financial and technological resources on those areas in order to have a positive impact and change in affected developing countries. The following five (5) thematic areas may contribute to reaching the objective during the decade:

(i) Management of water resources;

(ii) Promotion of new and renewable energy sources;

(iii) Launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensifying the management of existing forest resources;

(iv) Promotion of utilization of traditional knowledge;

(v) Establishment and/or strengthening, as appropriate, of early warning systems.

IDENTIFICATION OF MEASURES CONTRIBUTING TO THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

8. According to the provisions of the Convention, "the Parties shall integrate strategies for poverty eradication into efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought" (article 4, paragraph 2 (c)). Therefore, in accordance with their respective capabilities, affected developing country Parties, particularly African country Parties undertake to adopt the combating of desertification and/or the mitigation of the effects of drought as a central strategy in their efforts to eradicate poverty (art. 4 paragraph 1 (a) of the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa).

9. In this context, measures that will contribute to the eradication of poverty by reducing the vulnerability of people living in areas of the world affected by desertification and drought, inter alia, should be:

- Access to appropriate technology and methods to improve productivity, including the use of traditional knowledge;

- Credit and other supports for self-employment projects and activities that generate income, allowing people living in affected areas to care for themselves and their families by establishing special micro-credit programmes in affected developing countries that offer a combination of services and resources to their clients in addition to credit for self-employment. These often include savings facilities, training, networking, and peer support. Indeed, micro-credit is a powerful anti-poverty tool that has demonstrated relevance to people world-wide and in nearly every country;

- To promote and encourage private sector investments, including those from the local communities and national/domestic businessmen in activities and projects related to combating desertification and /or mitigating the effects of drought through various economic and financial incentives.

SUGGESTIONS OF INNOVATIVE WAYS TO MOBILIZE SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND TO PROMOTE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, KNOW-HOW AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

10. The need for financial resources to support action programmes to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought in affected developing countries is substantial, but the supply of resources is limited. Thus, the mobilization of substantial financial resources requires a multi-pronged approach to remain a high priority of international community concerns, including increasing financial resources from all sources as well as increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of available resources and mechanisms.

A) INNOVATIVE WAYS TO MOBILIZE SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL RESOURCES

11. Innovative ways to mobilize substantial financial resources, including new and additional resources can be grouped into four areas:

- Direct Commercial Financing Mechanisms, such as portfolio equity instruments, public-private instruments;

- Direct Concessionary Financing Mechanisms, for example National Desertification Funds (NDFs), debt-for-nature swaps, small- and medium-scale enterprise credit lines, small targeted grants;

- Market Development Mechanisms, in particular Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM), water resource use charges, tradable development rights;

- Structural Mechanisms, such as fiscal instruments, environmental performance bonds.

12. Efforts should be undertaken at the following levels:

- International level that includes developed countries, United Nations system, international/multilateral financial institutions and intergovernmental organizations;

- Affected developing countries at local, national, subregional and regional levels;

- Civil society, in particular NGOs and the private sector.

13. Examples of some innovative ways to mobilize substantial financial resources:

- Organizing every year of the decade a world-wide lottery on the occasion of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought (17 June) with a view to using the benefits for the implementation of the projects and activities identified;

- Launching a world-wide fund raising for the implementation of action programmes;

- Inviting oil companies around the world, particularly those operating in affected developing countries to give as a grant every year of the decade a one-day sale of their production for the implementation of the Convention;

- Encouraging all participants at each session of the Conference of the Parties, during the decade to give as a grant one day of their DSA to the implementation of the Convention;

- Inviting all Parties to the Convention and all other actors to provide a special financial contribution the first year of the decade for the implementation of projects and activities identified in the framework of the declaration.

14. Affected developing countries should shift towards a greater participation of the private sector in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. Affected developing countries should not only encourage increased ownership, but they should also attempt to attract more private interests to activities and projects related to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought.

15. Governments can influence the level of private sector investment in combating desertification action programmes through monetary, fiscal, and debt-management policies. While designing policies to attract international private capital, attention should be paid to three general issues:

- Attracting more private capital on the basis of its benefit to sustainable development goals;

- Ways to increase the beneficial consequences of such private capital;

- Ways to minimize the detrimental consequences.

B) INNOVATIVE WAYS TO PROMOTE TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, KNOW-HOW, AND CAPACITY-BUILDING

16. Innovative ways to promote transfer of technology should be based on mechanisms to identify, capture and transfer rapidly and efficiently new and environmentally sound technologies from North to South or from South to South. This involves:

- Identification of short-term training opportunities for the quick diffusion of new techniques and technologies;

- Actors on desertification field exchange information through appropriate networks;

- Elaboration of documentation that analyses and describes what is working in affected areas and why;

- promotion of environmental education through the establishment of, inter alia, ecological associations, particularly for children and youths.

17. While the emphasis in capacity-building and know-how should be on strengthening the knowledge of actors involved in the process of implementing the Convention, the key factor for success is finding committed individuals who accept the challenge of becoming environmental entrepreneurs. Such individuals are interested in creating private sector solutions to environmental problems, and are committed to building private sector institutions based both on sound business practice and social values and on environmental approaches.

18. Future environmental entrepreneurs are everywhere, but they themselves are unaware of their potential. They are found in all segments of society: business, academics, arts and culture, bureaucracy, professional groups, international organizations, religious institutions, political activists, social workers and many other backgrounds.

19. The movement needs a systematic plan for publicity and recruitment through exposure and dialogue programmes to find and develop the necessary talent as efficiently as possible. In addition, a training process needs to be established that will give each candidate an opportunity, within an enabling environment, to try out his or her talent.

PROPOSALS OF WAYS AND MEANS TO INTEGRATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION INTO THE MAINSTREAM NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES OF AFFECTED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS INTO THE MAINSTREAM STRATEGIES AND OPERATIONS OF DEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND MULTILATERAL AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTIONS

20. An integrated approach for the implementation of the Convention into the mainstream national development strategies of affected developing countries means that all factors of influence on desertification and drought and mobilization of resources to combat it or mitigate it are to be considered. Measures may then be taken to alleviate certain bottlenecks. Such measures in the physical environment may include soil conservation measures, rangelands improvements, etc. In the socio-economic and institutional rural environments it may include measures like organization of user groups or marketing facilities, in order to mobilize the population for local anti-desertification programmes.

21. Before an integrated approach for the sustainable management of land and water resources at a larger scale, for example, can be launched in the field, a number of activities are needed in the short run that develop and test potential tools and that create an enabling institutional environment.

Such activities include:

- Training of government staff;

- Establishment of monitoring facilities;

- Pilot projects in the field of integrated participatory management of renewable natural resources;

- Public awareness raising;

- The mobilization of existing knowledge on ecosystems and their uses: Traditional knowledge of resource users;

- Review of policies and formulation of action plans at the different government levels;

- Development of appropriate technologies and methodologies (sustainable at the different actors' levels: resource users, national and local governments).

22. Other methodological considerations include:

- The mutual reinforcement of projects initiated under action programmes, with other projects from other National Plans or Programmes;

- The involvement of civil society, in particular NGOs;

- The coverage of all major ecological zones by the different field projects.

23. The general objective of ways and means to integrate implementation of the Convention into the mainstream national development strategies are: to ensure that a process of national development is established, which *fully* incorporates

the principles of environmental sustainability and meets basic human needs, with a view to eradicating poverty.

24. Proposals of ways and means to integrate implementation of the CCD into the mainstream strategies and operations of all developed countries and multilateral and other development institutions may, inter alia, include the following:

- To improve coordinated and collaborative actions among developed and developing countries, multilateral organizations, and the private sector;

- To increase ODA, but also improve the absorptive capacity of developing countries to use such resources and enhance their domestic revenue generation capacity through institutional strengthening and capacity-building;

- To base assistance on the priorities identified in action programmes of affected developing countries,

- To work with affected developing countries to identify their needs and existing resources for combating desertification and /or mitigating the effects of drought;

- To increase effectiveness of available resources by improving access to existing financial institutions;

- To increase concessional lending through international institutions;

- To continue efforts to find efficient, equitable, development oriented and durable solutions to the debt problems of affected developing countries;

- To encourage their domestic private sector to invest in activities and projects aiming to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought in affected developing countries through appropriate financial incentives and guarantees.

SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO CARRY OUT FURTHER WORK ON BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS WITH A VIEW TO DEVELOPING SUITABLE QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE SYSTEMS OF EVALUATION

25. To carry out further work on benchmarks and indicators with a view to developing suitable quantitative and qualitative systems of evaluation means that the current information management systems are improving, which may improve the quality and availability of flow information on desertification and drought best practices, another approach will be that, where a number of sector specific databases, set up over time by different affected developing countries in response to their own data needs, should from now on be linked together. This should allow different sector-specific perspectives on multi-faceted projects in particular to be easily compared.

26. The improvement of monitoring capabilities to follow the condition of land, water and vegetation resources and the trends in factors influencing these resources (climate and weather, human activities), and capabilities to assess desertification and effects of drought and land degradation should be integrated with the monitoring of these phenomena. Only those parameters should be monitored that permit a solid assessment.

27. A more practical option would be to concentrate on a limited number of countries, carefully chosen so as not to bias the results, since there appear to be quite different patterns of funding in different countries. With a carefully chosen range of country studies, it may be possible to identify general relationships between aid flows, land degradation, poverty, external debt and other key variables.

II. PORTUGAL ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Recalling decision 8/COP.3 on enhancing the implementation of the Convention we underline that efforts to prevent and control desertification have not been sufficient to stem its spread,

Noting with appreciation the large number of reports presented to the Conference of the Parties (COP) by affected developing country parties and the significant amount of resources already provided by developed country Parties for the elaboration and implementation of national, subregional and regional action programmes,

Also noting with appreciation the interest demonstrated by intergovernmental organizations, regional organizations, non-governmental and community-based organizations, women and youth in the implementation of the Convention,

Considering the lessons learned from the review of implementation in Africa just started by the COP as providing a good basis to renew our commitment to a full and effective implementation of the Convention,

Reiterating the key role of national, sub-regional and regional action programmes and the importance of a full and effective participation of all parties in the process of their formulation and implementation,

Reiterating also the importance of ownership, the need to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure better co-ordination at national, regional and international levels in order to optimize the use of existing resources and to promote transfer of technology, know-how and capacity-building for combating desertification and drought processes,

Acknowledging that, among other things, illiteracy, poverty and debt affect significantly the implementation of the Convention and contribute to the vulnerability of people living in areas of the world affected by desertification and drought,

With the objective of contributing to the identification of the critical elements necessary to enhance the implementation of the Convention,

1. We call for the appropriate integration of National Action Programmes (NAPs) into national sustainable development strategies prepared by the affected country parties;

2. We pledge to make efforts to mainstream the CCD in development co-operation programmes in order to help mobilize resources for the implementation of, especially national, but also sub-regional and regional action programmes;

3. We recognize that a number of developed country Parties have decentralized funding activities to the country level and therefore call on developed country Parties to improve the flow of information on resources from the international to the country level;

4. We call for the appropriate international institutions to work on the enhancement of current international literacy programmes in the areas most affected by desertification;

5. We welcome and encourage efforts to relieve the debts of the heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC), especially the least developed countries (LDCs) affected by desertification, and will work to ensure that discussions within the Enhanced HIPC-Initiative lead to the provision of additional resources for poverty reduction strategies, in order to help promote a more favourable environment for anti-desertification activities in affected countries;

6. We will work within the World Trade Organization, consistent with its rules, to promote the interests of least developed countries, including those seriously affected by desertification, enhancing the market access of their exports and the benefits from further world trade liberalization;

7. We pledge to concentrate efforts, between 2001 and 2010, on areas particularly highlighted by NAPs in accordance with the individual conditions and opportunities of each developing country partner, *inter alia:*

(a) Reduction of illiteracy in semi-arid areas;

(b) The use of traditional and local knowledge aimed at providing empowerment for policy change;

(c) Capacity-building in sustainable development especially for poor and disadvantaged groups;

(d) Stakeholders' early warning systems;

8. We encourage those affected countries that wish to do so to consider the creation and functioning, of pilot areas aimed at putting into practice appropriate anti-desertification strategies defined on the basis of the participatory type of approach, and encourage the first pilot areas to be established by 2001;

9. We recognize the important role of NGOs, community-based organizations and other civil society representatives and we work to find ways to respond positively to the invitation expressed in operational paragraph 5 of decision 18/COP.3 as their participation at all levels requires an accrued support;

10. We will work to increase the synergies between the global environmental conventions and, particularly, will seek to ensure that the development of the mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol take due account of Parties' commitments under the CCD.

III. BRAZIL

RECIFE INITIATIVE DECLARATION

We, the Ministers responsible for the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Heads of Delegation present at the Fourth Session of the Conference of the Parties assembled in Bonn, considering the Recife Initiative established by decision 8/COP.3, *state that:*

The situation is grave in the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas devastated by desertification and periodic droughts,

Efforts to prevent and control desertification have been insufficient,

The loss of millions of hectares of productive land at an annual rate of approximately 60.000 km² intensifies migratory processes, aggravates social problems in urban areas and degrades the genetic heritage and biodiversity in those areas,

This results in tragic consequences to more than a billion people living in those regions, since the lack of essential natural resources, such as water, and the difficult access to social and economic benefits, such as health services, education, employment and income, prevent those people from leading a decent life and from taking part in efforts to build a more equitable society.

We recognize the need to adopt measures that may help reduce the vulnerability of people living in the affected areas around the world. Such measures, which demand effective action in the social, economic, environmental and financial fields, should promote development and contribute to the preservation, and especially to the sustainable use, of natural resources.

In order to strengthen the implementation of the obligations assumed in the Convention, we undertake to dedicate special efforts to the following fields, in the period of 2001 from 2005:

Strengthening of international cooperation, which should involve the active participation and political will of the developed country Parties and international organisms. The priorities in this field are transfer of technology and technical knowledge and mobilization of appropriate, new and additional financial resources for the developing country Parties. The success of action in all the other fields mentioned in this declaration will depend directly on the progress achieved in strengthening international cooperation;

Consideration of social issues related to combating desertification, particularly the need to promote eradication of poverty in the affected areas. Attention from the international community will also be required to the issues related to health and gender *[in combating desertification];*

Consideration of environmental issues related to combating desertification with emphasis on the protection of biodiversity, soil and water resources in the affected regions;

Consideration of the economic issues related to combating desertification, such as the development of policies and measures to encourage the increase in agricultural and ranching productivity, in income and in the availability of jobs in the affected areas;

Strengthening of education, capacity building, training and research, including the development of policies to eradicate illiteracy, and environmental education programs in the communities in affected regions.

In 2006, the Conference of the Parties should assess the results of the action undertaken by the international community in the five fields mentioned above, using the indicators it approved.

IV. CANADA

A Canadian perspective on the development of a Special "declaration" on the Commitments under the UNCCD

BACKGROUND:

At the COP 3 in Recife, the delegation of Brazil advanced the notion of a special declaration for addition to / supplementation of the UNCCD. The "Recife Mandate", as it was/is referred to, was intended to "enhance the implementation of the Convention". From the outset proponents were desirous of seeing a statement with a concise mandate for a more focused programme of work under the Convention. For the most part the debate at COP3 pertained to the substance of the programme of work - between, on the one hand, a desire to be as inclusive as possible (to allow for the variety of actions needed and the diverse situational variables) while, on the other hand, the need to circumscribe the work and prioritize actions to measure progress towards implementation.

What emerged from COP 3 discussion was decision 8/COP.3, which authorized the secretariat to "formulate, for consideration and adoption ... a declaration on the commitments under the Convention to enhance implementation of the obligations of the Convention". The secretariat will draft this based on the submission of written proposals / suggestions from Parties, relevant international organizations, NGOs to be sent by 30 April 2000.

CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

WHAT IS IT? (A "Mandate", "Declaration", "Decision" will likely emerge at COP 4)

A final decision on the nature and format of the document to be adopted at COP 4 will much depend on its content. Such a decision is thus too early to be taken. This being said, Canada believes that the content of the document should warrant the elaboration of a non-legally binding "declaration", as opposed to a regular decision of the Parties.

As for the term "mandate", we feel that it may raise different interpretations regarding the legal nature of the document, and should be avoided.

WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

Canada sees such a "declaration" as a political document that is given high visibility so as to act as a crystalizer and catalyzer for action. The political nature of such a declaration, however, should not be confused with the legally-binding nature of the obligations contained in the Convention and its annexes. The declaration would reaffirm existing commitments and, within these, strategically highlight areas for immediate action.

It could provide a time-frame to guide Parties in their review and assessment processes. A 10-15 years comprehensive assessment would be a realistic time-frame to look for results. But 5 year benchmark assessments might also be useful.

These assessments would be reflected in the reporting of the Parties based on a time line from the launch of implementation of the National Action Plan and Regional Action Plans.

OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE CONVENTION?

Canada will seek to ensure that this document is motivational and provides political backing to the effective implementation of the commitments contained in the Convention. The adoption of additional obligations, however, goes beyond the scope of what we have agreed to do at COP 3, as it would most certainly require the negotiation of an amendment or a protocol to the Convention. The document should make its political nature very clear.

WHAT MIGHT BE ITS OUTPUT?

Canada believes that through the articulation and negotiation of a "declaration" Parties would renew existing commitment and seek ways to further enhance the implementation of the Convention through the identification and agreement to focus on a limited number of sectoral and/or thematic areas.

Canada will encourage the development of a document which has identified a clear set of foci for targeted action but at the same time encourages the exploration of their interface.

For example, allowing for programmatic priorities that are cross-cutting in nature such as the application of traditional knowledge to combat desertification; and/or, cross-sectoral contributions such as soil and water management or joint-initiatives such as the proposed joint-programme of work with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Canada would like to see the declaration contribute to reinforcing and invigorating mechanisms within the Convention. We would look for strong links between the declaration's scoping and the work programming of the CST in particular. The Global Mechanism should definitely be asked to facilitate and track flows on a set of sector/thematic foci which would be identified for concerted action under this declaration.

HOW WOULD PARTIES SUBSCRIBE?

A proposal has been made that this special "declaration" be formalized and given profile through Ministerial adoption at the high-level segment of COP 4 (week 2). Canada is concerned about the notion of a formal high level signature session in the second week for two reasons:

We would see the declaration adopted by consensus - and thus endorsed by all. Given the consensus political nature of such a document, there should be no need to provide a formal adoption process. In fact, to do that would be confusing, as it could imply that the declaration has a status closer to being legally-binding.

Such a session would be dependant on the successful negotiation in week one of a concise, useful document text. Currently, draft text will be new to all, based on a compilation document. A formal process will put unnecessary pressure on Parties to develop a text in a hurry - but one which we will all have to live with for 10-15 years.

CONCLUSION

Canada is cautious, but supportive of the development of a "declaration" (or similar text) as an addition to the UNCCD because it can provide short to medium-term focus for action, within the Conventions longer-term framework of where we need to go.

V. MADAGASCAR

Décision 8/COP.3 : Initiative de Recife : le Gouvernement malgache souhaite le maintien du texte tel qu'il a été présenté à la troisième session de la Conférence des Parties.

VI. ECOLE ET VIE

PROPOSITIONS DE L'ONG ECOLE ET VIE CONCERNANT L'INITIATIVE DE RECIFE

Nous saluons l'initiative de Recife, car la plupart de nos préoccupations sont prises en compte, mais nous faisons les propositions suivantes :

- Nous proposons qu'un accent particulier soit mis sur le point éliminatoire de la pauvreté.

Quant bien même que la déclaration a pris en compte ce volet, nous proposons que des dispositions soient prises concernant ce volet. Par exemple : appui aux initiatives des populations.

- Nous proposons également qu'une partie importante des ressources financières qui seront mobilisées soit consacrée aux pays africains touchés par la sécheresse et par la désertification.

- Nous proposons que des dispositions précises soient prises concernant les ONG. Elles sont proches des populations. Les ONG sont très actives sur le terrain ; mais elles sont souvent bloquées par l'insuffisance de moyens (financiers, matériels, etc.).

Par ailleurs, nous proposons que la conférence des parties demande au secrétaire Général de l'organisation des Nations Unies (ONU) de lancer un appel pressant à la communauté internationale afin qu'elle vienne en aide aux populations victimes de la sécheresse dans la corne de l'Afrique en général et en particulier aux populations Ethiopiennes.

VII. ASSOCIATION LOS ALGARROBOS

It is our opinion that there is not sufficient economic and technical support for capacity building of the NGOs that are working in the arid, semi-arid and sub humid region. As a result they are not knowledgeable enough or motivated enough to do a good job within their area.

As a general rule their work is superficial, unconnected and their social impact is greatly reduced due to a lack of proper management, that is perceived by the community.

Understanding that desertification, poverty and migration have a close relation, NGOs working to combat desertification should become more knowledgeable on the complex causes that have led the rural poor into these extreme conditions of survival, that severely limit the possibilities of soil recuperation.

NGOs working with governments, multilateral and bilateral agencies should be able to offer to the rural poor, economic alternatives that may lead to an increase in the quality of life while at the same time improve the productive capacity of the land.

Operative goals in support of our idea

- Promote partnerships with universities, technical and research centres so as to initiate work on benchmarks and indicators;

- Promote regional activities (two or three countries involved);

- Stimulate and support horizontal cooperation;

- Individualize NGOs with managerial capacities to assist training of other NGOs;

- Organize training programmes for trainers and community leaders. This should be an ongoing programme to last between three to five years so as to produce sufficient trainers and community leaders that will lead the communities into the necessary change process;

- Stimulate and finance environmental education programmes for teachers that may include the organization of tree and shrub nurseries to combat erosion;

- Stimulate and finance, in regions where it is necessary, the organization of greenhouses so as to improve and stabilize the diet of school children.

The support of all these activities is education (training) with a holistic concept and should include the following areas:

- Environmental education;

- Organization and technical support of tree nurseries;

- Basic knowledge of forestry;

- Organization and technical support of greenhouses;

- Sustainable methodology for soil management and irrigation;

- Development of regional alternative economies.

The declaration of Recife should include firm governmental commitments to satisfy quantifiable and verifiable objectives in a certain period of time.

We propose assuming the following commitments:

Reduction of 20 per cent of rural poverty in the affected countries;

- Reduction of 40 per cent of the level of soil degradation in the affected countries.

- An increase of 20 per cent of rural education that should both quantitative as well as qualitative.

These commitments should be verified in a period of four years, starting from the year 2000.

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